

VZCZCXYZ0000
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHSN #1101 3440041
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 100041Z DEC 09
FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0122
INFO WHA CENTRAL AMERICAN COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN SALVADOR 001101

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2019/12/09
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [EAID](#) [SMIG](#) [ES](#)
SUBJECT: Funes Makes Strong Pro-US Policy Statements

CLASSIFIED BY: Robert I. Blau, Charge d' Affaires, Department of
State, Executive Office; REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

[¶1.](#) (SBU) At two separate events in a 24-hour period,
Salvadoran President Mauricio Funes made strong pro-U.S. remarks:

C Addressing the Salvadorans Abroad diaspora association annual
conference on Tuesday evening, December 8, Funes underscored the
pragmatic, national-interest reasons why it was imperative that El
Salvador have a close, "strategic" relationship with the U.S.:
roughly one-third of its citizens live there; and half of the
country's exports are sold there. He then stated that under no
circumstances would he entertain the idea of having El Salvador
join ALBA.

C At a ceremony Wednesday morning, December 9 to inaugurate a
bridge financed by the Millenium Challenge Corporation (MCC), Funes
thanked the USG and the USA profusely for contributing such
substantial funding (\$461M) to El Salvador's MCC compact, and
reiterated the commitment he and Secstate made in their June 1
meeting to establish a close, "strategic" relationship. At both
events Funes highlighted that Foreign Minister Hugo Martinez was in
the USA, meeting with Secretary Clinton to reinforce the tight
relationship, and also to discuss Salvadoran immigration.

[¶2.](#) (C) COMMENT: Funes's remarks are a direct rebuttal of
Salvadoran Vice President Salvador Sanchez Ceren's free-lancing
during his visit to Cuba this week, in which the VP said that it
would be a good idea for El Salvador to join ALBA. The VP was in
Caracas two weeks earlier, making strident anti-American
statements, and urging El Salvador to adopt "21st Century
Socialism." Funes disowned the VP's Caracas remarks, just as he
did in September when the VP lashed out against the USG in a local
FMLN rally in support of Manuel Zelaya. In private, Funes and his
closest advisors tell us they are worried about the hard-line
FMLN's shadow government, and say how USG support for Funes is
critical. The only reason Funes doesn't break with the FMLN is
that in the short term, Funes needs FMLN votes in the legislature
to pass budget and tax-reform legislation, as well as to obtain
approval for international loans.
BLAU